

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

ISSUED FOR THE STAFF OF THE SOIL CONSERVATION
SERVICE U. S. D. A. NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

March 10, 1941

No. 12



We in the Soil Conservation Service have done a lot of talking about soil conservation districts. We have encouraged farmers to form districts in areas where soil erosion is a serious farm problem. To the best of our ability we have been helping districts, when they have asked for our help. We think this is a good partnership--districts and the Soil Conservation Service--to obtain conservation results.

The farmers apparently think so, too. They keep right on forming districts and the acreage within district boundaries keeps right on growing. Pretty soon, according to indications, all of the State of Alabama will be in districts. Already you can go from the Potomac River near Washington to the Mississippi without setting foot outside of a district, and but for a narrow gap to let the Mississippi through you can go from the Potomac River to the Rocky Mountains in New Mexico without ever being outside a district.

And farther West, there's more news. Both houses of the Wyoming legislature have passed a soil conservation districts bill. It now awaits the action of the Governor to become law.

There's a map attached to this issue of Service News showing just how much of the country was in districts on January 15, 1941. Altogether there were about 270 million acres, and that's a lot of land. These districts also represent a lot of people, and that's our point today. As a matter of fact, there are two points

First of all, we must never lose sight of the fact that the men and women who voted for soil conservation districts are expecting something to happen in the districts they've formed. They're expecting, sooner or later, to see the erosion in their districts controlled. More particularly, each one is expecting to see the erosion controlled on his or her own farm. We want to see that happen, too, so let's remember that districts are made up of many individual farms and many individual farmers. Whenever we have the opportunity, let's assist them to get the conservation work started--there are a dozen or more simple practices that any good farmer can undertake right away: Things like seed plots, farm gardens, mowing weeds, planting cover crops, and the use of crop residues to protect eroding land. They'll be that much further along when the time comes to start on their complete farm conservation plan.

The second point concerns those farmers now living inside district boundaries who didn't vote--either for or against the district. In some places they constitute a considerable number of the farmers within a district. The percentage varies, just as it does in national elections.

(Continued on page 2)

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

(Continued from page 1)

But whether 90 percent, or 60 percent, or 40 percent of all the farmers voted, they are in districts today. The attitude and the work of those who didn't vote are going to determine to a large extent whether the district is a success or not.

A way must be found to let these people know they're living in districts, if they don't already know it. They should know about the advantages and responsibilities of districts. They should know about their opportunities to participate in district affairs--and how they can help make their district function in a truly democratic manner.

It's easy enough to talk about how the district is a great democratic institution, but it is already evident that democracy functions best in those districts where most of the farmers understand what the district is all about.

Maybe this educational work in districts is the job of the Extension Service, through the county agents. Maybe the districts themselves have a large share of the educational responsibility. We in the Soil Conservation Service also have a part to play. We are charged by the Congress with broad responsibilities in the field of soil and water conservation and we fulfill part of our responsibilities when we assist others who are working for conservation.

The farmers who voted know about their district and are taking active part in it. We need to think more about the farmers who didn't vote at all, and who may not know that the district exists.

- O -

J. S. Cutler, Region 3 Conservator, addressed the City Farmers Club of Cincinnati March 4. The subject was "Looking Ahead at Soil Conservation."

A TREE PLANTING BEE
TO HOLD THAT DUNE

A great tree planting "bee" is scheduled for Michigan's famous Dewey Hill just across the river from Grand Haven on April 19. The lake side of Dewey Hill, is a huge, bare, shifting sand dune; and the residents thereabout, many of whom live within the West Ottawa Soil Conservation District, want to stabilize that dune. An area of some 40 acres will become the "nesting place" for approximately 80,000 small trees. It is estimated that 550 people, including local men, women, and children, will be needed to plant the site. The Soil Conservation Service and the local SCS-CCC camp will help. R. E. Briola, Niles Eriksson, and Lewis Ruch are the SCS personnel assigned to the West Ottawa District. Gordon Walker is superintendent of the SCS-CCC camp.

Local business interests, farmers, school children, and others will help make this tree planting "bee" a success. The effort is a direct outgrowth of the soil conservation district. Dewey Hill, within the span of white man's residence, has buried a part of Grand Haven and forced its removal to the opposite side of the river. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent dredging the harbor of sand drifted in over Dewey Hill.

GOODACRE IS NEW CHIEF

Samuel Goodacre has been designated Chief of the Division of Service Operations to fill the position left vacant by the transfer of Shane MacCarthy to the National Defense Council. Mr. Goodacre will continue to act as chairman of the Forms Committee and the Manual Committee. In his former position of Administrative Officer of the Office of Assistant Chief, Administration, Mr. Goodacre was assigned certain additional responsibilities which will carry over temporarily into the new position until a further study can be made of the need for reassignment of these responsibilities.

HOUSE COMMITTEE URGES INCREASE OF SCS FUNDS

An increase of \$5,000,000 in the regular SCS appropriation, to be used for cooperation with soil conservation districts, was included in the 1942 Agricultural Appropriations Bill submitted early this week to the House of Representatives by the Committee on Appropriations. This \$5,000,000 represents an increase over and above the 1942 Budget estimates and raises the regular SCS appropriation figure to \$25,518,684. This total, in turn, is \$6,826,144 above the amount available for 1941. For Farm Forestry, the Committee recommended that \$400,000 be appropriated and for Water Facilities, \$500,000. These are the same amounts as appropriated last year. The amount recommended for Land Utilization is a little under the appropriation for last year.

Although encouraging, the action of the House Committee is not final in any sense of the word. The recommendations of the Committee must now be considered by the House itself, by the Senate Committee on Appropriations, and then by the Senate.

In its report on the bill, the Committee said:

"In the course of the hearings it was stated to the committee that the appropriation proposed in the Budget would provide the necessary technical and other services authorized in the Soil Conservation Act for 360 soil conservation districts organized in accordance with State laws passed to enable farmers to avail themselves of the benefits of the Federal Soil Conservation Act and that there will be 649 such districts organized by the end of the fiscal year 1942 of which 582 will require service during the year (hearings, p. 1028). It is estimated that, in order to provide adequate service on a full-year basis for 582 districts, \$8,000,000 in excess of the amount proposed in the Budget will be required.

"The committee consider that this Service is rendering the most far-reaching benefit to the agricultural industry generally and should be supported with adequate appropriations to carry its work effectively forward. Thirty-eight States, embracing all except two of the larger agricultural States, have now enacted State laws permitting the organization of soil-conservation districts and it is vitally necessary that the Federal Government make available the necessary funds to provide the services which these districts are authorized to receive if this splendid work is to continue.....

"A careful study of the situation indicates to the committee that, inasmuch as there will probably be some delay in completing organizational details in some districts, the sum of \$5,000,000 in excess of the Budget estimate will be sufficient to meet all requirements during the fiscal year 1942 and this amount has therefore been added by the committee. It is intended that all of the increase shall be used for service to soil-conservation districts."

During the hearings before the House Subcommittee on Agricultural Appropriations, the Chairman made the following statement (Page 1026, Hearings Before The Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 1942):

"But I want to repeat that I consider the Soil Conservation Service one of the most valuable of the Government agencies. I have been dismayed by the statistics which have been submitted showing the rapidity of erosion all over the country and the large number of acres permanently removed from production through erosion, and I have been even more dismayed when in my own State I have seen farms which, in my boyhood, were the most valuable farms to be found anywhere and the most productive, but which today are so worn, eroded, and gullied that they can never be made

(Continued on page 4)

RURAL YOUTHS TO GET TRAINING IN USDA SHOPS

Between 8,000 and 12,000 rural youths, of those now out of school, will get special training in mechanics in some 200 repair shops of the Department of Agriculture throughout the country, when final details of a new defense training project are worked out by a joint committee recently appointed by the USDA and Office of Education.

Under the plan, for which official approval is expected soon, the repair shops of Department bureaus, including SCS, will be used at night as training schools to fit out-of-school rural youths, aged 17 to 25, for future jobs in defense industries. Courses will run from eight to twelve weeks. The instructors will be practicing mechanics who work at their regular jobs during the day.

INCREASE OF SCS FUNDS (Continued from page 3)

productive again. The astounding rate at which this devastation has proceeded, the rapidity with which it has taken place, and the menace to the remaining acreage of the country challenges the attention of the Nation and requires prompt and imperative action."

O

E. G. Holt, who has been collecting species of birds suspected of carrying yellow fever, sailed from Caracas, Venezuela, on March 7 and will arrive in Washington the latter part of this week.

- O -

SCS has estimated at 447 million acres the total land in the United States that is suitable for continued cultivation under the best soil conserving practices, including the reclamation of all suitable land by irrigation, clearing and drainage. The 1930 census reported the total acreage of actual cropland as 413 million acres.

WYOMING GOVERNOR SIGNS DISTRICTS BILL

Wyoming is the thirty-ninth State to enact a soil conservation districts law. The Governor signed the bill on March 6 after it passed the Wyoming House by a vote of 45 to 10 and by 19 to 5 in the Senate.

Organization of districts in several localities where interest in conservation is high is expected at once.

LU EMPLOYEE IS CALLED TO FOREIGN SERVICE JOB

J. J. Jones of Land Acquisition Division is resigning to accept a position in the foreign service of the State Department. Mr. Jones is one of 39 candidates to pass, out of 483 who took the exam for foreign service officers.

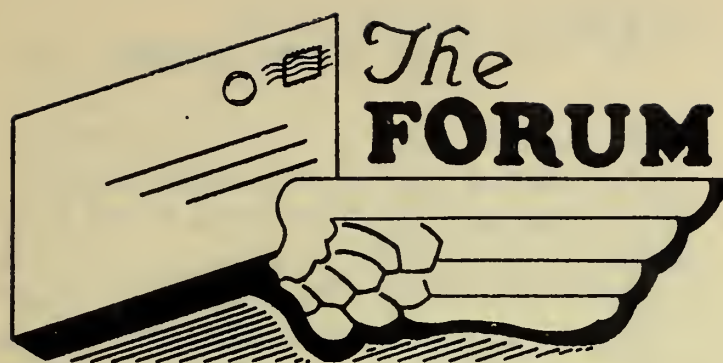
Mr. Jones has attended the night Foreign Service School at Georgetown University for 4 years and one summer school session at the Universidad Nacional de Mexico at Mexico City.

NOTE FOR STENOGRAPHERS

All SCS correspondence--except that written for the Chief's signature--will soon bear a subject line. Philip C. Mixsell, Head of the Record Control and Communication Section, is working out a subject line index for each division and to date has issued these indexes for Administration and Technical Operations. The new procedure, which will help in filing correspondence, will go into effect as rapidly as indexes are prepared for the various divisions.

- O -

Cedar District in North Dakota and Tri-County District in South Dakota split top honors in Region 7 for farm plans developed during the past six months. Each had 95 farm plans to its credit.



EDITOR, SERVICE NEWS: We thought you might be interested in a few measurements we took the other day.

The first indication of the proportion of land in the various land use capability classes in the York District (Pa-SCS-2) comes from the wear of colored pencils used in coloring the maps. As measured on this basis, 41% of the land is in Class II; 22% in Class III; 14% in Class IV; 11% in Class I; 7% in Class VII; and 5% in Class VI. Considering that the work is not uniformly distributed over the District, it is believed that the final proportion will add a somewhat greater percentage to the higher-numbered classes at the expense of Classes I and II, particularly Class I.

We have found that a better understanding and adoption of good land use can be obtained by coloring the fields on the Revised Land Use Map according to the intensity of use planned, as it gives the cooperator a more comprehensive picture of the part his farm plays in the land use of his community and the entire county.

E.B.

- O -

EDITOR, SERVICE NEWS: It has been recognized by many people in this Service that the job offering the greatest opportunity, satisfaction, and the one with the greatest importance is that of district conservationist. For some time, I have been thinking of attempting to be graduated to such an important position. However, my hopes were completely erased

recently when I chanced to read a soil conservation district program supposedly prepared or at least understood by the district supervisors who signed and submitted it through SCS channels of Region IV. I understood that most supervisors are farmers. If farmers are as smart as indicated in parts of this program, I feel incapable of being of much service to them as a district conservationist.

I base this decision upon the apparent competence of supervisors as evidenced by the following quotation taken from Page 4 of the Mulberry-Piney Soil Conservation District Program, State of Arkansas:

"This district is profusely covered with arborescent vegetation, all of these species suitable for lumber being indigenous. Most all exotic tree species found in the district are of little significance commercially or from the standpoint of erosion control."

I wonder if I am right.

E.L.

- O -

Thirteen papers on soil conservation and activities of soil conservation districts were presented by agricultural workers at the meeting of the Soil Conservation Section of the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers held recently at Atlanta, Georgia. The sessions were devoted to tying soil conservation technique to the land, economic and physical factors affecting soil conservation, and effective operations of soil conservation districts.

Newly elected officers of the Soil Conservation Section are: S. R. Doughty, Alabama extension conservationist, chairman; Jule G. Liddell, assistant regional conservator, Region 2, SCS, vice-chairman; and John T. Bregger, supervisor of SCS cooperative research project, Clemson, S. C., secretary.

CONSERVATION PRACTICES URGED BY FCA OFFICIALS

Farm Credit officials have taken a positive step toward coordinating the activities of the FCA and SCS. A memorandum just sent to secretary-treasurers of the National Farm Loan Associations in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida, states:

"The attached map.....showing the Soil Conservation Service activities with the legend thereon, and list of the Soil Conservation Service officials, are self-explanatory. •

"It will be noted on the map that at this time some of the counties in the State do not have soil conservation districts or projects. However, it is suggested that you be alert to such service as it is contemplated that it will cover the State in time.

"There is no doubt but that soil conservation and erosion control are the problems of many borrowers, and it is impossible to service loans or real estate successfully without recognizing these factors. The Soil Conservation Service has provided a very important source of information and assistance in meeting this situation. Its activities include research studies, the establishment of demonstration areas and farms, and cooperation with soil conservation districts within the limits of its available resources.

"In carrying out our loan and real estate servicing program numerous opportunities are presented for cooperating with and utilizing the maximum benefits of the Soil Conservation Service. Therefore, it is desired that you keep before the members of the national farm loan associations, direct and Commissioner borrowers, the importance of good soil conservation practices.

(Continued in next column)

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS ON THE JOB, SAYS CHIEF

Evidence of the way district supervisors are taking hold of their jobs came to him in two ways last week, the Chief reports.

One was a personal visit from the Board of Supervisors of the East Panhandle Soil Conservation District of West Virginia, who called at his office with Congressman Jennings Randolph. In the party were Charles C. Spring, Chairman, and J. Leslie Cain, Arch E. Clothan, J. W. Unger, and Albert Brichmer. Dr. Bennett said all of the members of the board were thoroughly familiar with local land problems and well informed regarding government programs through which they hope to obtain assistance. He was particularly gratified, he said, by the way the supervisors understood and used the land-use capabilities maps of the Service.

The other indication of alertness on the part of district supervisors came in the form of a letter from the board of the North Concho Soil Conservation District in Texas, transmitted through Congressman Charles L. South. The supervisors wanted complete information regarding ten different government agencies, SCS, CCC, WPA, PWA, FSA, FHA, Army Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, Water Facilities Board of the Department, and the Flood Control Board, with a view to requesting their assistance. The inquiry, according to the Chief, was an encouraging sign of farsighted effort to develop a broad program for the district.

"Encourage borrowers to call upon the Soil Conservation District officials for assistance and advice in proper conservation practices. Borrowers may file application for such assistance with Work Center Technicians or with the County Agent."

A similar memorandum is to be sent to Farm Loan Association officials in all States.

CCC ENROLLEES TRAIN FOR FIGHTING FIRES

Forty-three SCS-CCC camps in Region 5 have given on-the-job training in fire fighting to 1,080 enrollees and leisure-time training to 843 within the last 6 months. Similar courses are planned for the other 44 camps in the region.

The men are enthusiastic about the course which provides a reserve of enrollees and supervisory personnel in each camp for emergency fire fighting duty. Only those men who are trained to perform such work properly and safely will be used in fighting fires.

The fact that SCS-CCC camps in the country spent about 80,000 man-days preventing and fighting forest fires in the 1940 fiscal year makes it particularly important that all camps give training in this emergency activity. During the fire season enrollees from SCS-CCC camps, who have been trained in fire fighting, may be transferred to U S Forest Service camps.

The course offered in Region 5 camps is an adaptation of the standard CCC fire-fighter training course prepared by the Milwaukee regional office of the Forest Service for forestry camps in Region 9. Although it is intended primarily to aid in fighting forest fires, it also gives adequate training in controlling brush and grass fires. SCS-CCC camps in Minnesota, Wisconsin, southern Illinois, and southern Missouri, where there is considerable forest land, have been requested to train 40 enrollees in each camp annually. Camps in the Corn Belt are training 20 men each

Each area office is responsible for working out plans for the course with the State forestry agencies. In the eastern Iowa camps, Sylvan Runkel of the area staff and G. B. MacDonald, State forester, developed a brief outline of the standard course which was more suitable for conditions in that area. Runkel, who has had experience in fighting fires in national forests, assisted technicians and foremen with the course in each camp. In Missouri and southern Illinois, representatives of the U S Forest Service, as well as the State forester, assisted in organizing the training schools.

(Continued in next column)

FIELD MEMORANDA

Issued Feb. 27 - Mar. 8

- 987 Appointment Forms: Declaration of Appointee forms 124 and 124b (Revision in procedure re identification of appointees.)
- 880-A Policy Governing Future Construction of Recreational Facilities on Title III Lands. (Revision of F M. 880.)
- 988 Reimbursement for Expenses on Details and Transfers of Headquarters
- 989 Transfer of Mr. Goodacre to the Position of Chief, Service Operations Division.

- O -

C. B. Manifold, who has been traveling in Central and South America to study possibilities of rubber production, arrived March 8 in Miami where he will stay for two weeks before traveling on to Washington.

- O -

The Chief's new bulletin, "Soils and Security", an unnumbered publication, is just off the press and is available upon request.

- O -

Frequency rate for lost-time accidents in Region 8 was 8.51 percent lower in 1940 than in 1939. Five camps in the region went through 1940 with only one disabling injury each. Camp 5U has passed its third consecutive year without a disabling injury.

Each area office is responsible for working out plans for the course with the State forestry agencies. In the eastern Iowa camps, Sylvan Runkel of the area staff and G. B. MacDonald, State forester, developed a brief outline of the standard course which was more suitable for conditions in that area. Runkel, who has had experience in fighting fires in national forests, assisted technicians and foremen with the course in each camp. In Missouri and southern Illinois, representatives of the U S Forest Service, as well as the State forester, assisted in organizing the training schools.

PRINTERS' INK

"Aiding Wildlife in Houston County" by Thomas R. Evans, March *The Conservation Volunteer*.

"Losses of Crippled Game Birds" by Urban C. Nelson and Gustav Swanson, March *The Conservation Volunteer*.

"Ecological Relationships of Playa Lakes in the Southern Great Plains" by John M. Parker and Charles J. Whitfield, February *Journal of the American Society of Agronomy*.

"Farm Forestry as Influenced by the Soil Conservation Program" by John F. Preston, February *Journal of Forestry*.

"My Father Was a Soil Builder" by Angus H. McDonald, which originally appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, is reprinted in the March *Reader's Digest*.

"Cooperative Timber Cropping" by Frank B. Harper, February *West Coast Lumberman*.

The editor of the *Oklahoma Farmer Stockman*, in his February 1 issue, leads off his feature page, "Talks With Our Readers", with the subject, "Save the Waste Land", a discussion of the 2-year experiment on scrubby black-jack land at the Guthrie, Okla., SCS field station.

Through cooperation with the Service's visual education section (Paul Bissell's office) Region 3 arranged an exhibit for the American Wildlife Institute in Memphis, February 16-19. The exhibit consists of a small automatic projector using 2x2 Kodachrome slides, flanked on both sides with attractive panels prepared by the Washington staff.

The exhibit is scheduled to be used during the Sportsmen's Show in Dayton, Ohio, April 12-19 and in Cleveland, March 22-30, for the American and Canadian Sportsmen's Show.

PROJECT MONOGRAPHS

The following project monographs have recently been sent to the Library and are available for loan:

Region 3.

- Ind-1. Leatherwood creek project, Bedford, Ind.
- Oh-4. Granny-Dry creek, Mount Vernon, Ohio.

Region 5.

- Ia-5. Grand river watershed, Greenfield, Iowa.
- Ill-1. Sangamon river project, Le Roy, Ill.
- Minn-3. Beaver creek project, Caledonia, Minn.

Region 10.

- Calif-4. Placerville project, Placerville, Calif.

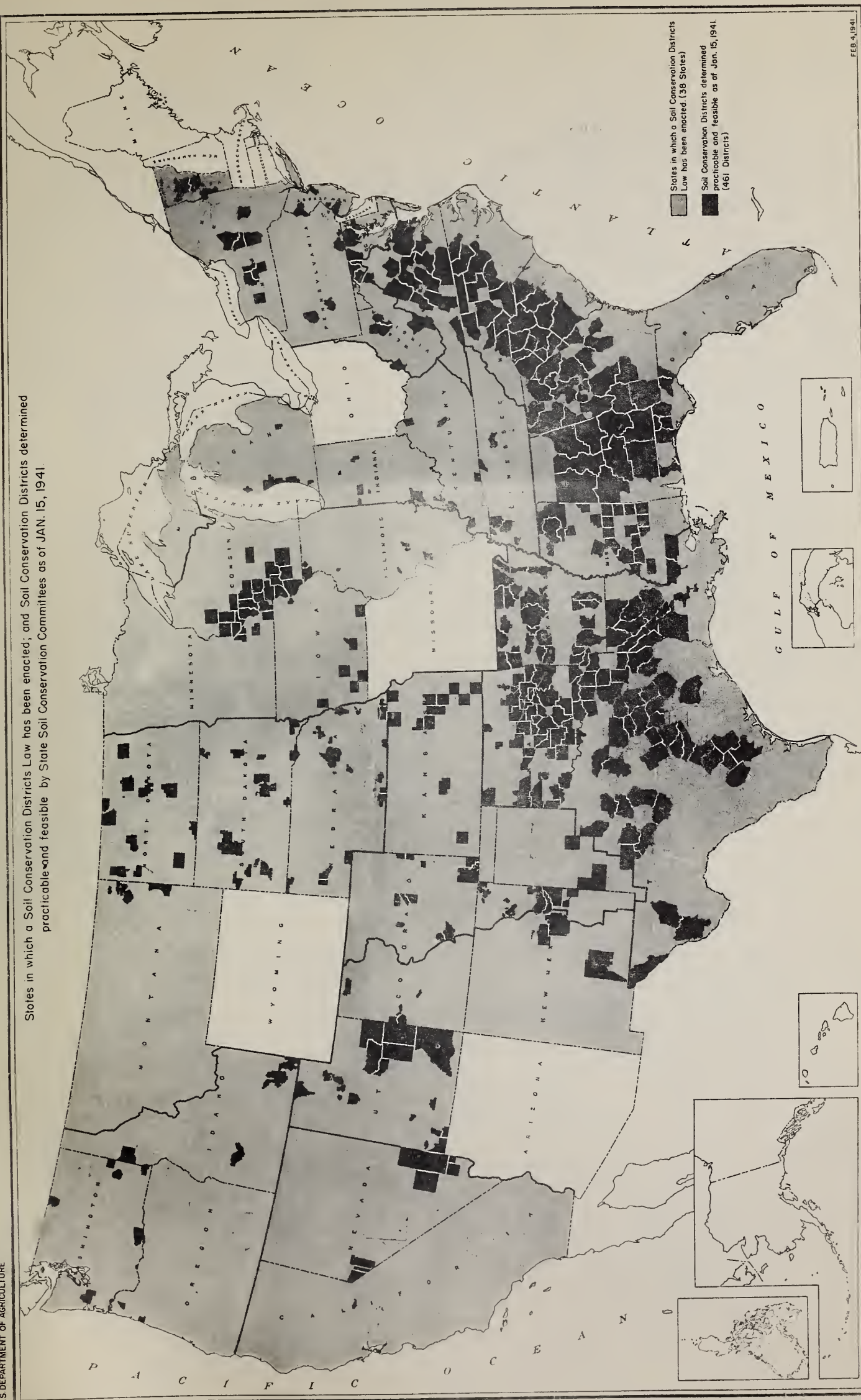
- O -

Twelve enrollees who have been trained to run terrace lines at Gainesville, Ga., CCC camp are now running lines for six work units, Area Conservationist W. H. Howell reports. With assistance furnished by the Forest Service Camp at Waynesboro for two work units and by the National Park Service Camp at Rutledge for four work units, enrollee line crews are now available for 15 work units in Area 2, Georgia, Mr. Howell says.

- O -

A Seattle company has designed a demountable house, its interior and exterior walls covered with cotton. The house was designed to help remove a housing bottleneck in the defense program and reduce the nation's cotton surplus. Company officials said that the USDA would take the house on a nation-wide tour when construction is completed, about two weeks from now. Cotton will cover the walls, and also serve for insulation, floor covering and draperies.

States in which a Soil Conservation Districts Law has been enacted; and Soil Conservation Districts determined practicable and feasible by State Soil Conservation Committees as of JAN. 15, 1941.



Mildred Benton
1525 South Building